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PEARLS:

CONSISTING PRINCIPALLY OF

ORIGINAL RELIGIOUS ARTICLES,

By R. L. F. *Fuller*

The limited space allotted the author, permitted of only a very brief discussion of the numerous themes of interest touched upon; but it was the sole purpose and aim of the author to state, in the most concise terms, a few sparkling and living truths that might excite the interest and touch the hearts of those who read them. To those who read its pages and are in sympathy with the sentiments contained in them, this little volume is kindly inscribed.

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P R E F A C E.

A few years since there was published in New York City a Journal in which appeared in the main the articles comprised in this volume. After reading and re-reading the articles as they appeared from month to month in the Journal in question, we have concluded to publish them in book form under the title of Pearls.

The publisher's justification for burdening the reading public with another book is not based upon the alleged claim that the articles contained in this volume are ably written, or that they are of rare literary merit, but rather upon the claim that each article is a gem of rare beauty, radiant with living thought and glowing with emotional language. These articles are valuable when taken collectively, by reason of their being the thoughts of one mind and experience of one life reduced to language. Two minds of corresponding culture and brilliancy, dwelling upon the same theme, will invariably produce different thoughts. If the theme be of a religious nature the thoughts of one may find lodgment in the hearts of those who read them, while the thoughts of the other may produce no lasting impression. It is scientifically true that each brain represents an organic individuality. Dr. J. C. Bucknell, an eminent London physician who has made the study of the brain a specialty, remarks, "that no one brain is like any other brain, either through the force of inheritance from the parent organism, or through the influence of education or other modifying circumstances. Every mind possesses such a peculiarity of the individuality in the susceptibility and strength of the organs that the same disturbing influences never produce in two brains the same pathological effect." It is said that the Poet's productions are but his thoughts and emotions, under the spell of inspiration, reduced to language, and that the thoughts and language he employs must first kindle emotions in his own heart if it is to produce any effect upon those who read his productions. We mentioned the experiences of one life, and in a general way wish to discuss this thought briefly.

It will be seen by those who read this volume that the author makes frequent mention of experience; in fact, we may say that the language of experience is the golden clasp that binds together the pages of this little volume. The author seems to grasp the idea that experience is the one vital and life-imparting element in Christian life; or, as he has expressed it, "experience is the very soil in which a Christian life is sown, and that Conversion is but stumbling over the threshold of experience into the arms of Christ." A Christian life is dwarfed and stifled that is not all radiant with glowing experiences. The experiences of a religious life are but so many

golden steps upon which the Christian plants his feet that he may ascend higher into the realm of thought, purity and holiness of life. There are no experiences that compare with those of the Christian—not even the Poet in the hour of rapture, when his imagination is kindled and exalted, and when his tongue is moved and loosened with inspiration and words luminous and grand flow in sweet chiming music from his entranced transfigured lips,—can form any just conception of the experiences that beam all radiant with Heaven's brightness upon the Christian pathway, and is to him a sweet bewilderment of wonder and joy.

There may be found in some of the articles in *Pearls* some forcible arguments against infidelity, although it was not the spirit of the author to treat this and kindred themes in a controversial way, believing as he did that truth, stated in sentiment, is more effectual; or, in other words, he sought to clothe truth and make it beautiful, but not to arm it. Truth is of itself a living force, but the language in which it is couched may add to or detract greatly from it as a living force. No language of an ambiguous character found its way into any of the articles in *Pearls*, as the author evidently wrote under the conviction that not only is there a charm about common place and homely language, but that it is most effectual. While the author of *Pearls* expressed his declarations of belief in bold and unequivocal language, and showed no disposition to shield the unsheltered sins of men or to still the storm of fate that is blowing wild about the evil fabric of superstitious religion and false institutions, he evidently was influenced by the fact that it is not what any individual conscientiously believes to be right that is to determine the boundary line of truth, but that the thing to aim at is consistency—to get through this life without trampling upon the sublime verities that lie in grandeur and beauty before us.

For the sake of variety a few articles have been admitted from different authors, to which the word *select* has been appended. We trust we shall have reasons to add many new and beautiful articles in the second edition of *Pearls*; for if the sales justify it, we shall increase its size indefinitely. The publisher has no apologies to make, notwithstanding the fact that the articles contained in *Pearls* were never intended to be published in book form. We send this volume forth with the sincere wish that it may meet with approval, and that who ever reads it may be enriched both in mind and heart, and that those of its readers who have not yet begun to live the higher life may, through its influence and instrumentality, be led to seek and find that rarest and most precious of all treasures, the Pearl of greatest price.

R. L. F.

PEARLS.

THE IDEAL STANDARDS.

There is that prophetic gift in every soul of any elevation by which there hangs over every step a vision of something higher, and better, and nobler, and sweeter and purer. Every man who is really and fully organized on a noble pattern has hovering over him a vision of angels transcendentally more beautiful than any embodiment of it. He has conceptions of truth infinitely more grand than any exhibitions of truth which he sees on earth. Beauty flames in the heavens with colors brighter than any that can be reproduced in this world. How do they who attempt to fulfill the offices of friendship find every day that they sit in judgment upon themselves because they have not half way come up to their conception of its patience, of its disinterestedness, of its gentleness, of its faithfulness!

Do I need to ask you what your ideal is, ye that have sought in a thousand ways to reach that very conception? The musician is charmed with the song that in his imagination he seems to hear the angels sing; but when he attempts to write it down with his hands he curses the blundering rudeness of material things by which he cannot incarnate so spiritual a thing as his thought. It is all torn; it is stripped of its plumage as it were, and reduced to captivity. The true orator is a man whose unspoken speech is a thousand times better than his utterance. The true artist is not a man who can look upon the thing which he has coloured and say, "It transcends what I saw," but a man who says, "Oh! if you could see what I saw when I first tried to make this, you would think this most homely. This *excelsior* of every soul; this sense of something finer, and nobler, and truer, and better—so long as this lasts, a man can scarcely go down to vulgarism. So long as this lasts there is in every man a nascent inspiration which tends to look away from self—which certainly does not incline a man to measure himself by his fellow-men. It is vulgar for a man to be satisfied with himself because he is better than his fellow-men.

You never executed as well as you ought to execute. Over the

production of the scholar, over the canvas of the artist, over the task of the landscape gardener, over the pruner's knife, there ought to hover perpetually his blessed ideal, telling him, "Your work is poor—it should be better ; so that every day he should lift himself higher and higher, with an everlasting pursuit of hope which shall only end in perfection when he reaches the land beyond.

EXPERIENCE ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS IN BUSINESS.

Experience in business is a school, in the very broadest sense of that term, and its different phases, and secrets, and rules, must be learned alphabetically, by slow, difficult, and trying processes, that put to the severest test our mental, moral, and physical qualities. Nearly all men are dashed to the earth at one time in their lives ; the weakest never rise, the strongest do, and are made nobler and better by the rough experience.

The history of this world has been one of continual conflict, both personal and national, and to rise above conflict will be to rise from earth to Heaven. It is a divine law that we should be perfected through experience and ordeal ; and whoever evades them, dwarfs his own life ; and the question that interests us is—Are we deriving any benefit from our rough experience in business life ? If we are not acquiring a competency, by our present industry and efforts, are we gathering that knowledge from our experience that will guide us, like a beacon light, at some future time and under more auspicious circumstances ?

Ninety-five per cent. of all men who engage in business fail, at some period in their lives, and those that come after will be wrecked on the very same shoals. These facts are discouraging in their general bearing, yet from them we are to derive the very elements of our strength. The recognizing and realizing of these facts serve to show us the amount of moral courage that is requisite in undertaking a business career, and that the small chances of success exclude the possibility of succeeding by reckless and daring enterprises, and that the most careful, persistent and courageous efforts are indispensable to the acquiring of wealth.

CHARACTER.

In the main, the characters we see in every day life are like the uncut diamond, and need all the polishing of the stone before the brilliant gem appears. Characters that appear to us rude and uncouth may be wholly changed by cultivation and refinement. Individuals rarely ever, morally and socially, rise above the plane of their associates. Like begets like ; and it is possible for even the grandest natures to become so attached to things of low estate that they cannot rise above them.

It is not justice to any individual to estimate upon his character unless we know something of his circumstances, associations and chances for self-improvement. Any individual who is endowed by nature with gifts and excellencies, and has native talents, may step from outside his sphere of degrading associations, and, in a very limited time, rise to a transcendently higher plane and sphere of action and usefulness.

THE POWER OF CONVERSION.

The indwelling of Christ in the soul, is to the soul what the warmth and glow of the sun in springtime is to the garden, causing the plants to spring up and bud and bloom in beauty and fragrance. It is perpetual winter in the souls of those Christ has not kindled by His love. A religious life is one fraught with Divine impulses. A religious life is one of education in Divine things. With conversion comes a higher order of intelligence, and a truer conception of right and wrong than can possibly be attained in any other way. Conversion to Christ is the blossoming of the soul into a heavenly atmosphere ; it is the golden gateway to the spiritual realm.

The fleeting moments of time are glittering gems, more radiant and precious than the diamonds that shed their luster around a crowned head. They are the threads out of which all the royalty, grandeur, and beauty of life is woven. They are the infinitesimal fragments of that everlasting cycle of ages—eternity. Oh! voyager from earth to heaven, gather up these fragments of time as memorials of divine mercy and love, so that when the light of eternity breaks upon your eyes, when you awake on the shores of a never ending world, your disembodied soul may stand transfigured in Zion, before God, without any thing to fear or regret.

LINE OF DISTINCTION.

There is a sense in which men have a right to judge, and to draw lines of distinction, and even to censure their fellow men. The eternal destiny of men's souls hinges upon being told and taught the distinction between right and wrong. The world is full of men who have no convictions or definite conceptions of truth, and of its boundry lines, and who do not know right from wrong, who would hide the sins and faults of their fellowmen behind the mock shield of charity. Life is a battle between truth and falsehood, between righteousness and sin, between purity and crime, between temperance and intemperance, between liberty and despotism, between

Christ and the world. The great earth on which we dwell is the field of carnage. From every direction the tread of soldiers is heard around us. On every side the battle is fiercely waging and the foes of Truth are falling amid the din of conflict. Whose shall the conquest be? Who shall carry forth the banner of Triumph into the enemies' camp? and who shall bear away the palm of victory? from whose battle camp will ascend heavenward shouts of victory and hosannas of praise for the final triumph? Who are those who say peace, when there is no peace?—First pure, and then peaceable. There is nothing to be gained by throwing the veil of charity over the unsheltered sins of guilty men.

CHRIST THE CHRISTIAN'S HELP.

The Christian and the Infidel stand on altogether different footings. If Christianity is true, then it is also true that the Christian, in his efforts to live a life of purity and withstand temptation, is supplemented by Divine power. If Christianity is true, then it is also true that Christ sustains a personal relation to his people; that He leads them by His unerring hand, and sustains them by His unfaltering arm. Arguing from this standpoint, it is inexcusable folly in any person to compare the ability of the infidel or indifferent man with that of the Christian, to withstand temptations in all their seductive and trying forms. Infidels seek to destroy the very ideal of an exalted manhood, when they declare that every man has his price, and that there is a current in the flow of temptation that man cannot resist.

A man who does not with a fiendish spirit and disposition assume the role of a reckless and daring violator of the more manly and Christian traits of character, may deserve some credit and praise for maintaining this standard of conduct and establishing this limited elevation of character; but above such a standard of character there is an elevation upon which the true Christian lives that is transcendently higher, nobler, and purer.

Through the week we go down into the valley of care and shadow. Our Sabbaths should be hills of light and joy in God's presence; and so as time rolls by we shall go from mountain top to mountain top, until at last we catch the glory of the Celestial Gate, and enter in to go no more out forever.

Men who grapple with and pass judgment upon the great questions of life must have enlightened consciences and be armed with the sword of the Spirit of Christ, if they are to teach the world lessons of infinite truth, and if the conquest is to be theirs in the great battle of life.

INGERSOLL ON ALCOHOL.

The ministers of the Gospel, who have any Christianity at all about them, heartily endorse the Temperance movement. So do the intelligent men who do not belong to any church; in fact, nearly everybody. Col. R. G. Ingersoll, who is called the great infidel, in speaking to a jury in a case which involved the manufacture of alcohol, used the following eloquent language:

"I am aware that there is a prejudice against any man engaged in the manufacture of alcohol. I believe from the time it issues from the coiled and poisoned worm in the distillery until it empties into the hell of death, dishonor and crime, that it dishonors everybody who touches it—from its source to where it ends. I do not believe anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against the liquor crime. All we have to do, gentlemen, is to think of the wrecks on either side of the stream, of the suicides, of the insanity, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the destitution, of the little children tugging at the faded and withered breast, of weeping and despairing wives asking for bread, of the men of genius it has wrecked—the men struggling with imaginary serpents produced by the devilish thing! And when you think of the jails, of the almshouses, of the asylums, of the prisons, of the scaffolds upon either bank, I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the damned stuff called alcohol! Intemperance cuts down youth in its vigor, manhood in its strength, age in its weakness!—it breaks the father's heart, bereaves the doting mother, extinguishes natural affection, erases conjugal love, blots out filial attachment, blights parental hope, and brings down weary age in sorrow to the grave! It produces weakness, not strength; sickness, not health; death, not life. It makes wives widows, children orphans, fathers fiends, and all of them paupers and beggars! It feeds rheumatism, nurses gout, welcomes epidemics, invites cholera, imports pestilences, and embraces consumption! It covers the land with idleness, misery and crime! It fills your jails, supplies your almshouses, and demands your asylums! It crowds your penitentiaries and furnishes victims to your scaffolds! It engenders controversies, fosters quarrels, and cherishes riots! It is the life-blood of the gambler, the element of the burglar, the prop of the highwayman, and the support of the midnight incendiary! It countenances the liar, respects the thief, esteems the blasphemer! It violates obligations, reverences fraud, and honors infamy! It deforms benevolence, hates love, scorns virtue, and slanders innocence! It incites the father to butcher his helpless offspring, helps the husband to massacre his wife, and the child to grind the parricidal ax! It burns up man, consumes woman; desolates and detests life; curses God, despises heaven! It suborns witnesses, nurses perjury, defiles the jury-box and stains the judicial ermine! It bribes votes,

disqualifies voters, corrupts elections, pollutes our institutions, and endangers governments! It degrades the citizen, debases the legislator, dishonors the statesman and disarms the patriot! It brings shame, not honor; terror, not safety; despair, not hope; misery, not happiness; and with the malevolence of a fiend it calmly surveys its frightful desolation, and, unsatisfied with havoc, it poisons felicity, kills peace, ruins morals, blights confidence, slays reputation and wipes out national honor! then curses the world and laughs at its ruin. It does all that and more: *It murders the soul!* It is the sum of all villainies, the father of all crimes, the mother of all abominations, the devil's best friend, and man's worst enemy!"

THE APARTMENTS OF THE SOUL.

There are apartments to the Soul which have a glorious outlook; from whose windows you can see across the River of Death into the shining city beyond; but how often are these neglected for the lower ones, which have earthward-looking windows. There is the apartment of Veneration; its ceilings are frescoed with angels, and all exquisite carvings adorn its walls; but spider webs cover the angel ceiling, and dust has settled on the delicate mouldings. The man does not abide there. The door of Conscience has rusted so it cannot be opened. Hope has but one downward looking window, and faith and worship are cold and cheerless; all these are shut up in most soul houses. In lower apartments you shall hear in some riot and wassail; for the passions never keep Lent, but are always holding carnival; and in others, sighs and lamentations of wounded souls; and in others the moanings of disappointed ambition, and in others, bickerings and strifes; while in others there are sleep and stupidity.

Ah! most men live in these wretched apartments and never mount to those airy ones where they can hold commerce with God and angels. Now Christ comes to light up the house from foundation to roof-tree with the glory of God. He knocks at the door, and when it is opened to him he enters and gives to every room order and beauty, and the voice of song and wondrous fragrance from his robes, which have borrowed perfume from every flower that grows in the Celestial Gardens. Who will open the door.

If a bell were hung in heaven which the angels swing whenever a man was lost, how incessantly would it toll in days of prosperity for men gone down, for honor lost, for integrity lost, and for manhood lost beyond recall! But in times of disaster the sounds would intermit; and the angels looking down would say: "He that findeth his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

I marvel how a woman, with her need of love, with her sensitive yearning, clasping nature, can look into the face of the Lord Jesus, and not put her arms about His neck and tell Him with gushing love, that she commits herself, body and soul, into His sacred keeping.

Men openly and with the exercise of their reason persist in breaking and violating the civil law, which is always open before their eyes, and in the face of the penalty which inevitably follows. But they more flagrantly and with the exercise of less reason violate God's moral law, which is even more authoritative and infinitely more important than any civil law in existence. If the Sermon on the Mount were written in golden letters that would extend across the vaulted skies of heaven, men would hang a screen between it and their eyes and persist in violating its command of infinite moment.

To every soul of any elevation that is left untrammelled by undue influences and by views and opinions adverse to truth, Christ's teachings and life mean royalty of manhood—a manhood that can face furious anger, brave storms of persecution, suffer cruel and unjust accusations, and submit to the infidelity of professed friends, and which can assert its patience, disinterestedness, gentleness, forbearance and love when the waves of misfortune, backed by the murky threats of the scowling tempest, are ready to sweep over it. The resources for such a manhood must come from Christ's Sermon on the Mount. We must go back to it and learn and practice the beatitudes that come from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake. The advent of Christ marks the area of this manhood, which towers in royalty and beauty far above any conception of manhood that human thought and ingenuity ever reached up to; it is a manhood centered in Christ, and has for its foundation divine attributes. It partakes of all the elements that signalize and crown as divine the history of Christ's life when upon earth. It is not to be found anywhere out of Christ. Every element and feature of it draws its vitality and life from Christ, the fountain-head. He is the true vine; the branches which thickly cluster around him on every side are centered in him and draw their support from Him. If the Bible teaches one thing more than another in unmistakable terms, it is that to be a Christian is to be like Christ; it is to build life upon that broad and noble foundation which he laid—which involves disinterestedness, fidelity, charity, patience, meekness, love, and all the countless attributes that cluster around His life of self-denial.

and self-sacrifice. This is regeneration—this is a divine miracle; it is in this transformation of man's life that the grace of God surpasses all finite conception, and will throughout eternity be the theme of adoring praises among the shining hosts that silently tread the courts of heaven. But, says the hard reasoner, I cannot in my rude blundering incarnate spiritual truths; to me they are as the vapor that rises in the atmosphere. I cannot believe anything that requires the exercise of faith; to me such things are as the picture the poet limns with beautiful words; but there is no substance there, and consequently no reality. Men's lives are like the pattern made by the weaver's loom. They enlist in business, and with something of a definite idea of what life is to be to them, they lay their plots and plans, and as they look along the avenue of life before them, they behold many pleasant sights—the rippling brook, the garden of fragrant flowers, and the shade of the ever-green trees, everything is promising; the loom is at work; the shuttles are uninterruptedly flying back and forth; and a beautiful pattern is being woven. But finally at some stage in life—perhaps early, perhaps at middle life, or even in old age—an interruption comes—a thread breaks, and its effect in the pattern is soon discovered. A moment later and another breaks, and then another; the rest, being weakened begin to snap here and there. Eventually the shuttles refuse to move to and fro, and the pattern stops. Suspicion is aroused—your character is at stake; friendship is tested only to show the perfidy of professed friends; they scatter in all directions; they who should stand by faithful among the faithless throng flew from you to escape danger from the debris of your fragile structure as it comes crumbling, like some ancient ruin, to the earth. Your mistakes are flaunted in your face as acts of villainy; creditors pursue you like hungry wolves; friends either desert you or are turned to foes.

Here is a test for religion. Who can wade the turbulent waters of adversity that are to sweep away your fortunes, serenely and without a murmur, unless sustained by the grace of God and the infinite love of a conscious present Saviour? It is the quickening influence of divine love that sustains the Christian as he wades the dark waters of trouble and watches the drifting debris of a scattered hope carried on the waves of misfortune out of sight, and witness on either shore the infidelity and ingratitude of professed friends. An act of ingratitude may not be a very great crime in itself, but it acts as a silent key to unlock the door of the human heart, which exposes all the morbid anatomy of a distempered life. It acts as a secret spring, whose mission it is to unveil and expose the life of those who have allowed their moral standard to droop so low that it must inevitably be stained by the fetid impurities that rise from and surround so low a plane of manhood. Selfishness and ingrat-

itude like ghastly scars, disfigure the lives of those who are their victims. But let us speak words tempered with forbearance and charity. Perhaps nearest you in your associations may be some who have thus erred, but if so they are those who have broken their cup at the well of salvation, and while the fountain of eternal love and purity still flows they cannot stoop to drink. How few, if perhaps any, are there who are living lives out of Christ, who are not entangled in the meshes of error; who on almost every question that involves principle, are hopelessly wrong; whose minds are distempered with crude error, and whose dispositions are morbid and morose! They are continually pursuing hideous phantoms, and hugging ungainly delusions; they are living in an atmosphere that is poisoned with the malaria of sin, indifference and infidelity. How apparent is the momentous fact that God, in the exercise of His infinite wisdom, never intended that men should choose their own pathways regardless of divine guidance, and face life's battles without divine help! It is a law of divine economy that men can not go right who reject God and refuse to be guided by His counsel. The scales of error and moral blindness drop only from the eyes of those who have undergone conversion. The guardian hand of Christ's Spirit alone can lead men into the ways of truth and duty and give them grace to walk in them. Men are not able to engage in hand-to-hand struggles with the adversaries of their souls, brave life's battles, face its conflicts and ultimately come off conquerors, unless encircled and sustained by the everlasting arms of Christ, and are living so near Him in their daily walk that they can hear the footsteps of guardian angels. Those who are thus sustained need not despair, even though the blinding snows of misfortune fall thick and fast around them, and they wake only to discover the fragile hope of this world's success lying in ruins at their feet.

A BEAUTIFUL THOUGHT.

When the summer of youth is slowly wasting away on the night-fall of age, and the shadow of the path becomes deeper and life wears to its close, it is pleasant to look through the vista of time upon the sorrows and felicities of our earlier years. If we have had a home to shelter and hearts to rejoice with us, and friends have gathered about our fireside, the rough places of wayfaring will have been worn and smoothed away in the twilight of life, and many dark spots we have passed through will grow brighter and more beautiful. Happy indeed are those whose intercourse with the world has not changed the tone of their holier feeling, or broken those musical chords of the heart, whose vibrations are so melodious, so tender, and so touching in the evening of their lives.

MORAL STANDARDS.

There is involved in the deliberate act of deception, falsifying, or misrepresentation, all the degradation of moral principle and character that belong to a life of overt sin, and crime. One deliberate sin of whatever nature it may be, essentially lowers the whole moral standard of a man. There is underlying every sin a principle infinitely worse than the sin itself. It is the silent motive that lies back of every action that makes it either praiseworthy or infamous. In vain do we affect a sublime unconsciousness as to the part the moral motive and impulse that lies back of every action plays. The motive that inspires the painter, makes his production an object of contempt or admiration, the principle interwoven in the poet's theme, makes his production either sublime or degrading.

There should be perpetually above every action and deed, a lofty ideal of grandeur and beauty; the highest and noblest motives should lie back of every thought, deed, and action in life. But there is little pleasure in contrasting what this world is with what it should be. Crude error sways its sceptre above and around us; the way of right, of truth and duty is trammelled by morbid and distempered views and teachings. Over and against the highest aspirations, aims and objects of the Patriot, the Philanthropist and the Christian is arrayed the influence of the Sceptic, the Infidel and the Atheist, together with a myriad throng of enemies, of truth and of mankind.

INTEGRITY.

Remember there are two sides to all questions: one is the side of justice and truth, the other of wrong and falsehood. If you choose the side of justice and truth, notwithstanding the opposition and persecution you may meet with, triumphant victory will eventually crown your life. The earth with all its instrumentalities will cast its influence with you, and God is pledged to vouchsafe to you success.

If you are so unfortunate as to choose the side of wrong and injustice, you will not be able to attain success, even though you imperil your immortal soul; because God, in his infinite wisdom, designed that justice and truth alone should triumph. Act from principle and do not underestimate principle, for if you are ever to accomplish anything in this world principle must be the anchor of your life. If you disregard principle, you will more certainly than fate bring upon yourself disgrace, shame, and sorrow as the penalty. A Divine Providence has so nicely adjusted things in this world, that it is impossible for any person to do wrong without paying a penalty. Surely, whoever sows to the wind will reap the whirlwind in all its fury and anger.

THE CONFLICT OF BELIEFS.

Doubtless the greatest and most unanswerable problem in life is the almost equal division of men's views, opinions, and beliefs upon every question and issue of life, even those questions and issues that relate to purity, justice, and truth, and that affect both this life and the life beyond. There is not a question in the whole economy of human experience, ranging from the loftiest, grandest and purest ideal conception of conduct, duty, and principle of the Christian and spiritual man, down to the lowest material thoughts and standards of the indifferent and infidel man, upon which there is not division, followed by subdivision, until identity of views and beliefs is almost lost when an attempt is made to trace and distinguish one from another by their close resembling hues and shades.

There is no question, belief, or faith, or of the incomputable phases of such, from the greatest and sublimest down to the most infinitesimally small and trivial, upon which men are not almost equally divided.

Upon the questions of government, involving the empires and republics of the nations of the earth, down to the most insignificant and technical questions among individual men, there is a ceaseless and insufferable clashing of views, opinions, beliefs, and faiths. Not all the inharmonious music of ten thousand different instruments playing different tunes would afford a parallel to the discordant and clashing views and beliefs of the human race. They are as incomputable as the sands strewn upon the sea shore, or as the glittering stars which beyond telescopic vision revel in the illimitable space that separates earth from heaven. We may look above and beyond the tempest of life to where there is Heaven and peace, where the choral songs of angels will break upon our ears, above the music of which, if the one name, Jesus, is heard it will sound sweeter than all the combined harmony of that blessed throng. But while there is unfeigned pleasure in looking above and beyond this scene of discord and conflict, there can be seen, by those who have faith to look, signs and evidences foreshadowing a harmonizing of faiths and beliefs, and a reconciliation of the clashing elements in the social, religious, and political systems here on earth. The radiant glow of gospel truths is fast puncturing daylight through the false and superstitious systems and institutions of religion, that should have lived and perished in the dark ages of the world.

A change of opinions and views relative to revealed religion marks the advent and swift passage of each succeeding year of the present age. Men are beginning to think rightly. Superstitions, which have so long blinded men, are dropping like scales from their

eyes, and infidelity is fast losing its iron grasp. Every human organization and institution in the world, except the Church and the Public School, is tottering to the earth like the corrupt thrones of Oriental dynasties. The swiftly flowing current of Christian progress and enlightenment, if its progress is undisturbed by the hand of Providence, will, inside of fifty years, have swept every human institution except the Church into the ocean of oblivion.

We cannot forecast the future, but one thing we are sure of, the wheels of progress are not going to stop and it has ceased to be a problem as to whether the Church is to be overturned or not ; if it is not to be overturned, then it is divine ; if divine, then it is to lead the world to triumphant victory.

Let us take up again the question of conflicting views : it is both painful and interesting to study and trace the variety of views and beliefs of men, and see their close approach to each other. For instance, orthodoxy and infidelity represent the two extremes of beliefs. Were it not for the intermediate schisms and phases of beliefs, which mingle and commingle between these two extremes, and which vary their hues just enough to render discrimination from their many rivals possible, the two great questions, religion and infidelity, would soon come to an issue, when the right of supremacy would be determined ; but ranging all the way between orthodoxy and extreme infidelity, there is to be found a manifold variety of different beliefs and faiths, and which sustain an almost indiscriminate relation to each other ; each respective belief taking on just enough color to prevent its identification with some other belief or faith. Let us take that faith which sustains the nearest relations to orthodoxy, viz : Universalism. Granting that out of the endless variety that go to make up the great realm of belief, that there is but one that is unquestionably right, and that all others are aliens and abstracts, and that they are wrong just to the extent that they differ from the orthodox faith, then who ever holds to universalism is just as surely wrong as the most extreme infidel. There is not to be found a Christian who sustains a vital union with Christ, and, looking from his standpoint, but that knows that universalism is essentially wrong ; for every vital and fundamental belief and doctrine culled from Christ's own teachings, and sustained by the orthodox believer, the Universalists have a corresponding one shaded and colored so artistically that discrimination is sometimes baffled ; yet there is a very vital difference between these systems of faith. The Universalists do not stand firmly upon any doctrine of the bible. They cling tenaciously to the very edge and outskirts of all the essential beliefs that Christ so plainly taught. They falsely decide the question of universal salvation and kindred questions, through the use of technicalities, and the misinterpretation and mis-

construction of language. Universalism is a shield for a life of indifference ; it is subtle infidelity, intrenched behind gospel truths.

Such is the length and breadth of the Universalist faith (which above all other faiths is the nearest allied to the Christian's faith) when measured by the orthodox rule, which is the only true and unfaltering measure ; with it the faiths, beliefs, and doctrines of every race and nation, is yet to be measured. The orthodox believer stands on an eminence reared infinitely higher than that of any other believer. As the true artist has perpetually hovering over him an ideal of the beautiful image of his picture, which by far transcends in reality, what his production will be when finished ; so the true Christian, who has the conscious realization that Christ's spirit in its gentleness, sweetness, and purity, is directing, leading and teaching him, has a conception of truth, conduct, and duty that infinitely transcends any ideal of the same that the indifferent world can grasp or attain. It is infinitely more obligatory upon Christians than upon any other class to think right, and to act right, and under the influence and teaching of divine impulse ; if they doubt they are damned.

The ponderous volume of conflicting views and beliefs of the world is an interminable medley of contradictions and inconsistencies, which the race has industriously culled from the labyrinth of a fanciful imagination and a distempered reason ; while the intrinsically sweet and precious truths of a revealed religion have been swallowed up in the maelstrom of bickering, discord and division.

Every positive belief has a negative side ; every absolute truth can be divided into a multiplicity of phases. It is by reason of this that those fundamental beliefs that underlie the great social, political and religious systems of mankind are honey-combed by a manifold variety of different views, doctrines and beliefs, which involve men in a mazy labyrinth of perpetual doubt and discord. Like a company visiting the Mammoth Cave, and ere their journey through its silent and darkened chasms and vaults is half finished, their oil gives out and their lamps refuse to guide their feet ; dismayed by their misfortune, they scatter and wander to and fro through the unexplored chambers of that subterranean dungeon, until hunger, cold and despair overtake them, and they lie down one by one, pillowing their heads upon the damp stones, and perish. Thus men, who reject the bible as a guide to their feet, follow the avenues of their complex imagination and reason, until they perish and are lost in the maze and shadow of doubt and infidelity.

A proportion of the race, larger than the number of professed Christians, are avowed infidels. A much larger proportion of the race cling to some fanatical and superstitious religion which embodies in it the very essence of moral blindness. A still larger

proportion are indifferent to the questions of religion and moral responsibility. Out of the countless throng of Christ's followers, ranging somewhere between one and two-thirds, are nothing more than nominal believers, who have stumbled in their blindness over the threshold of experience and failed to find Christ.

Notwithstanding all this, the coming ages slope toward a royal termination of all things earthly. Christ's spirit is brooding over the world, and is enlightening the darkened souls of unbelieving men. A millennial day is dawning; its twilight is breaking upon the world; the race is progressing away from the foils and snares of false doctrines, beliefs, and religions, while the religion of our Lord and Saviour is towering above the range of infidelity.

More progress has been made within the last century than has been made before during all the preceding ages of the world's history. With each succeeding year indicating an incomputable increment, and with the ratio of increase increasing each year beyond comparison, where is it to stop if it is not to culminate in perfection?

The progress of the last century is but a prelude to a perfect day and the foreshadowing of the fulfilling of Christ's prophecy; and not all the influence of all the races and nations of the earth combined can turn the tide that is flowing on to perfection, under Divine surveillance, while back of it lies the will and impulse of God, who knows no variableness nor shadow of turning.

SOCIAL DRINKING MORALLY WRONG.

If the sale of intoxicating liquors is morally wrong, then it is morally wrong to license such a business; and whoever gives his sanction and vote to license such a traffic is as guilty of the violation of moral principle as the liquor dealer who stands behind the bar and deals out the subtle poison.

The inevitable drift and tendency of social drinking is to moral degradation. To teach men that drinking is morally wrong, is to reform them; but to do this is to strike at the very heart of some of the social customs of the world--the theaters with their innumerable immoral features and tendencies, and the giddy ball-room dance follow in this train, and are schools for immoral teaching and training. But the most formidable and distressing of all social customs is the New Year's day banquet. New Year's calling is the infernal innovation and custom of modern society. The custom of spreading the New Year's table with intoxicating drinks for young people is an infamous and infernal temptation and snare. The result of this un-American custom has been to increase largely the great army of wretched inebriates. There is (when viewed from a moral standpoint) involved in this custom of spreading the New Year's

table with ardent spirits all the sin, infamy, degradation, shame, and crime, that belong to the drunkard's life. The distressing and formidable results of the custom belong as much to those who countenance and encourage it as it does to the victim who, through its influence, commences a career which can result in nothing less than sin, disgrace, and death.

It is the principle involved, and that prompts one to take a part in such a heinous and debasing custom as social drinking, that merits unrestrained censure ; there is involved in the very act of taking a single glass the principle and cause that necessitates a drunkard's hell. So far as moral principles are involved, an occasional social glass brings a man to the level of a drunkard wallowing in the gutter. The difference between the disgrace and infamy is in the degree, and not in the quality of the sin or violation of moral and physical law. There is involved in the act of taking one glass of strong drink all the debasement, sin, and infamy that belong to an inebriate's life and death, so far as the principle itself is called into question.

CONVERSION.

The spiritual change called conversion is essentially a miracle, and one of the highest order. It is a serious and undecided question whether one can live a spiritual life who has not experienced this change in a way that the incident itself is one of the most illustrious as well as the greatest events in their lives. Paul's conversion was the most extraordinary of any on record in the Bible or in history, and yet that radiancy of divine light that broke upon and around him is but typical of what every sinner experiences who, after days of agonizing prayer, awakes to the conscious realization that that peace which passeth all understanding has taken possession of his soul, and that he has received a spiritual impetus that has sent him so far on his way in a divine life that he never rebounds back from whence he started. There is nothing that comes within the range of human experience that is so tangible as the soul's conversion ; and if Paul's conversion was more tangible than that of every person who is truly converted in this day and age, it is by reason of its being one that was attended by a material display of divine light and power which, at that time, and ranging back through all preceding ages, was no uncommon occurrence.

Similar miracles mark the whole traditional record of the world. Previous to that period the overtures of angels were familiar incidents in Bible history ; angelic messengers came and went to and fro bearing tidings, sometimes of peace and yet more often of wrath—messages of divine import, such as were never entrusted to

mortal care. Such were God's means of communication with men; and yet those miracles which sparkle with divine light and beauty—the narration of which fills the soul with a sense of grandeur and sublimity, and tinges the whole sacred history with a luster of divinity, were no more real than the subtle and invisible influence and experience which is so familiar to every true Christian; that experience which brings the soul in contact with divine influence and favor, which links the human and divine, and which quickens the soul with divine light and love.

The radiant light and glory that enveloped the apostle Paul could not be more tangible, real, and divine than the communion and conscious relationship of every regenerated soul with Christ as a personal Saviour. There is not the least evidence, either in the Scriptures or in human experience, to support an assumption that the human soul can worm its way into a spiritual or regenerated state of existence. A regenerated soul is the noblest thing in the world. Spiritual birth is a boon to be prized infinitely above everything else on earth; and it is not unreasonable to expect that throes and pains should characterize such a birth. That soul which reaches up to the divine, and establishes relationship with Christ, finds Him only by stumbling and blundering over the dangerous path and through the mist and shadows of experience, until it reaches the prairie and sunshine beyond. Contact with the wild animals of the forest, contests with formidable beasts in the arena, or facing the dread enemy on the battle field, is a moderate ordeal compared with the experience of conversion that has often been related by Christians. This is the extreme in one direction. Contrast this with the generally acknowledged and deplorable fact that ranging somewhere from one to two thirds of the church membership are composed of nominal Christians, and can give no plausible and consistent record or account of their conversion, who know but little, if anything, at the end of a professional Christian life of spirituality and religion as a soul experience, and who have no hope beyond that of faith. Compare these extremes and you have a serious and irreconcilable medley. Which extreme will you choose? It cannot but resolve itself into this, that spiritual life, growth, and experience are the essential conditions and features of religion. Hope, belief, and faith, so far from being saving elements in religion, are but tinkling cymbals; and any belief that hinges on any or all of these is a heresy. Salvation is not found in living a moral life; it is not bought by the profuse bestowal of charity; it is not secured by living within the pale of the church; it is not found by clinging tenaciously through life to doctrines, ordinances, and dogmas. A life of prayer may be one of hollow mockery, and may land one anywhere else but in heaven. It is a spiritual life that saves

—it is the infinite grace of God that saves ; it is a radiant experience which Christ gives to every one whom He accepts and acknowledges as His own. What is the record of the conversion of those attempting to live a Christian life, but who know nothing of its inward experience ? Was their conversion an ordeal and the greatest event of their lives, or was it of so small moment and so little importance that no record was made of it ? It is a bold assumption for anyone to suppose that he is converted, unless it was of such a nature as to leave an unmistakable impress ; it is still bolder assumption to suppose that conversion does not forcibly and radically change one's whole disposition, character and life. Growth in grace is the best and only infallible test of conversion. It is time for any person to suspect their religion when they find that they are not growing in grace. Nothing is more noticeable in the record of the teachings of Christ and the apostles than the blindness of men and their inability to understand or form a true conception of what spiritual life meant, or to appropriate it to themselves. This failing is attributable to the fact that seeking and obtaining spiritual life is an experience. It is groping in the darkness and through shadow until Christ is found, and until the radiant light of the spiritual life breaks upon our eyes. The ways of experience are no less difficult now than in those early days. Conversion is the trying ordeal of the soul in finding Christ and finding one's self. A spiritual life is the highest plane on which it is possible for a person to live ; it is virtually living above temptation, sin and the world ; and whoever, in their attempts to live a spiritual life find themselves breaking one or more of either the small or great commands of Christ may, with all propriety, ask themselves if they have not made a mistake and climbed up some other way, instead of entering by the door ; for whoever willfully breaks one of Christ's commands is guilty of them all. Besides, it may be safely laid down as a criterion that Christ's love constrains the true Christian from taking a false step. If they truly love Christ they will not inflict pain upon Him, or crucify Him anew, by doing what they know to be wrong and sinful ; but how many there are whom, it is evident, have made this mistake, who make their conscience their touchstone in deciding this question, and who point to it and say, "It is the voice of God and I will obey it and follow wherever it leads the way." They set it up as an infallible Pope and obey its injunctions and conform to its whims, when, so far from its being the voice of God in this particular case, it is the mask behind which Satan is doing his fine line work which he does not wish the world to detect. Conscience is a fortress behind which the world entrenches many of its most subtle and dangerous sins. No one is prepared to live a spiritual life until he has broken the fetters with which this tyrant has bound him. How

many men who have been slaves to conscience have been led by it to tread into the dust every high and noble ideal standard of honor, conduct, and duty, rather than acknowledge that they were being led by a blind guide, and at the same time relatively elevate themselves in their own estimation! They would sooner pull down the stars out of heaven and trample them beneath their feet than acknowledge their mistake. Such are the extremes to which conscience will suffer its victims to go.

Men of the world, who are neither Christians nor professed Christians, will allow their moral standard of conduct and duty to fall so low that it will dip into the sulphuric lake below them if they can only get the sanction of their consciences; and then, with a nonchalance which inflicts pain upon those who realize the danger in which they stand, boldly assert that they are not afraid to appear in judgment at God's tribunal, having followed the dictates of their consciences and having done what they believed to be conscientiously right. These are some of the subtle, seductive and fatal results of being led by the conscience instead of by the spirit of a risen, living, loving Saviour. Identifying conscience with the voice of God is a deception which cannot be too greatly magnified for the personal safety of all who accept it as such. In saying that whatever is conscientiously right is essentially right, and that it is the highest tribunal before which we can decide what is right or wrong, depends upon whether it has been lowered from its primeval standard. It depends upon whether it has ever been stifled or deadened by sin. Conscience, like the soul, intellect, and every other faculty of the human anatomy, was made perfect, and would serve as an infallible guide if it could only be kept up to that standard to which a Divine Creator keyed it; it is a fallible and unsafe guide just in the proportion to which it is subject to vacillation and degradation.

The noblest specimen of a man, who sets up his conscience for his guide and standard, cannot be living more than half way up the scale of moral elevation between the avowed sinner and the spiritual man. Nothing but the grace of God can free the soul from the natural depravity which inevitably tinges it. Conscience is the unregenerated soul's torch and guide, and is ten thousand times better than nothing; but to the regenerate soul the spirit of Christ is an infinitely better guide, and with such a soul, one is never substituted for the other. Conscience has often interposed between the sinner and Christ, and has successfully perverted the very object that many have sought to attain. They have, in an unsuspected moment, listened to the voice of conscience and turned back before Christ was found. The saddest and most lamentable mistake that can possibly force itself upon our attention is that of failing to enter the door that leads to Christ. The tap at the door for admission into

the conscious presence of a loving Saviour was too gentle to be heard by Him. He did not recognize it as the knocking of one who was indeed seeking entrance into the hallowed presence of the world's Redeemer; and the victim of misapprehension goes on through life unconsciously bearing the burden of his sins, until the weight of them sinks him into eternal ruin. Language is not subject to enough of variations to justify any one in the belief that the entrance to the fountain of spiritual life will be opened for a gentle tap, which to Christ may mean nothing. The door of possibility to spiritual life is closed in the faces of those only who fail to strive to enter in.

THE DARING OF THE INFIDEL.

The rashest thing that can possibly force itself upon our attention is the daring and defiant denial by infidels and sceptics that religious experience is what Christians claim it to be: that experience that comes radiant down through the atmosphere of heaven and lodges in the souls of men, they declare it to be only an enthusiastic feeling, the result of excitement. Experience is the one vital element in spiritual life, and must precede an intelligent faith in God. The nature of the faith the believer has in God before conversion is very different from that of the believer who has experienced conversion. Many scales of error must fall from the eyes of the most intelligent and enlightened nominal believers before they can see as those see who have experienced the purifying and enlightening influence of Divine love.

Those who have had this experience can understand that things seen are temporal and things unseen are eternal: While infidels drape the unseen things of heaven and eternity in mystery, and declare that we can be certain about those things only that we can see with our eyes, and handle with our hands. There hangs above the Christian's faith, and back of his experience, all the radiant glory of heaven, there breaks perpetually upon his eyes a vision of the bewildering multitude of angels, who from the foundation of eternity have been gathering around God's throne in heaven. In sight of the true Christians, who look beyond this life, are joys and pleasures transcendently higher, purer and sweeter than this world can yield, while celestial rays of light from the windows of their mansion in heaven fall upon their pathways to guide their erring feet. To them, Christ is a brother, and God is a father, sustaining these relations of kinship to the Divine; and with these

radiant prospects of eternal life before them, all of which depends upon their sincerity in their belief and faith. Why should infidels doubt their sincerity, when to them their belief is verified by experience, and is more sacred to them than life itself.

In a spiritual life, conversion is the starting point; with it comes an experience that turns darkness into light, and clears away the mist and darkness that envelope the eyes of the unbeliever. Infidels can never understand the nature of a spiritual life, or understand religion to be a tangible reality until they have undergone this experience; yet they do not so much as believe that the declarations made by Christians relative to their experience is true, much less have they an intelligent faith with which to seek and accept Christ. Without faith there is no such a thing as pleasing God, or finding Christ.

Infidels, without ever making a test of religion by which to determine whether it is true or false, disbelieve and reject it.

The Christian's knowledge and conception of Christ comes by stumbling and blundering and groping in the darkness through the tangled vale of experience; but how much better it is to pass through such an ordeal in seeking and finding Christ and finding one's self than it is to be lost in the midnight shadows cast by the sombre clouds of indifference and infidelity.

The difficulty and feeling of uncertainty that disturbs and harrows the minds of those who wish to seek and find Christ and learn of the sweet and mysterious joys that belong to Christian life, is the great and serious obstruction and obstacle in the way of the world's conversion. Or, in other words, the difficulty almost every individual experiences in coming into that state of mind and feeling when they will resolve in the face of all that hinders them to begin a Christian life, has been an insurmountable hindrance in the way of the world's conversion to Christ. The difficulty in breaking up base indifference which is scarcely more respectable than avowed infidelity stands directly in the way of the progress of Christ's kingdom here on earth. How many have perished in sight of the ever flowing fountain, where the immortal soul can assuage its thirst. How many have famished from hunger in their attempts to live upon the husks that fall from this world's tables, when right before them is their Father's table, spread with the richest manna from heaven, all because of indifference in appropriating to themselves the promises of eternal life. In the matter of personal religion everything depends upon ourselves, as well as everything upon Christ. No one would become a Christian without the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, any more than a bud would become a blossom without the influence of the sun, yet personal religion is the result of personal choice.

THE PERIL OF LIFE'S VOYAGE.

How fateful and sad it is that either indifference or unbelief should, like driftwood lie across the very current of our lives; defeating every possible hope of heaven and immortal joys. How sad it is that young people raptured with the world and in love with all around them in life should carelessly drift upon either of these currents until, in a moment when least expected, they dash upon the unseen and fateful shoal and perish; for a wreck upon the shoals of either shore, or in mid-ocean must mark the sad and tragic end of every life. Yet, while nothing is more certain, and while there is no truth better known perhaps to many who may read these solemn words of entreaty and warning, how lightly will they be regarded, and how quickly the impression will be effaced; and the voyagers, enamored with life, their hearts beating with the impulse of joy, with every fleeting moment jeweled with love and happiness, will be eagerly wafted on the breeze that kisses the sails, until the tempest becomes too strong, and in the dark and wierd night their vessel will be dashed to pieces on the cruel rocks.

Oh! where in all the world is there a heart aglow with the love of Christ, and feeling the force of this sad truth, that does not utter a wail of bitter anguish over their fruitless efforts to win some loved one to Christ. How sad it is, when after our best efforts we fail to change the lives of our dear and cherished friends, with whom we should have the greatest influence. Oh, how can we break up indifference; for it is this more than unbelief, to which the myriad voyagers over the ocean of life to eternity are anchored. How sad it is to witness those who are wholly unprepared drift upon the uncertain stream of time out into the dark ocean of eternity. Yet life is even more serious than death: they contrast very much as do living issues with dead ones; and a life filled with mistakes, sin and sorrow, is more sad than death at any time or under any circumstances. What makes death inexpressibly sad is that nineteen out of twenty of the people into whose faces we look as we meet them in the social circle or in the counting house or upon the street have not that preparation requisite for heaven and its peaceful fruitions. How many lives at their close must be likened to the mariner's night watch and struggle at the helm of his ship during the angry storm only to be lost forever in the maelstrom just at the moment he expected to see the first gleam of morning dawn.

While by reflection upon a life of misfortune, sin, and sorrows we can find no other words with which to express our thoughts than those intended to excite a feeling of melancholy, it is infinitely more sad to reflect upon the nonchalance of the indifferent, while sailing life's voyage clinging to some delusive hope, stifling convictions, deferring duty, until at length, in an unguarded moment, their vessel

is dashed to pieces amid the breakers of the farther shore, and they awake from their sleep of indifference only to hear the waves close in upon them as they sink forever and perish without a gleam of hope. The day makes haste when this unbidden and sad event and change will come to all. How many who read these solemn words will be ready and watching?

THE PROBLEM OF INFIDELITY.

Human thought vibrates through the whole range between extreme precision and extreme laxity. From the great arc of thought there swings a pendulum from one extreme to the other. Great resistance is met with by those who seek to limit the range of this swinging pendulum. There are those who would have us believe that anarchy would be the sequence of the harmonizing and conciliation of the thoughts, views, and opinions of the world; others would have us believe that lifelessness would be the fateful result of such a conciliation. Both views are extravagant and wide of the mark. The swinging of this pendulum from the extreme of Puritanism to the extreme of Infidelity is one of the noticeable and sad features of American progress. It is one of the most important features of the social world that this problem should be solved; and we should not lose sight of the fact that we are amenable to a beneficent Creator for the solution we give. Religion and infidelity constitute the two most extraordinary extremes with which the world has to deal. Infidelity, however prevalent it may be, is unnatural, and is the outgrowth of misapprehensions, misconstructions, and misinterpretations of thoughts, principles, and language; it is the result of biased, dwarfed, and distorted conceptions of truth, immortality, and of God. Infidelity, in its subtle way, poisons every soul with which it comes in contact; it stifles every noble and spontaneous impulse of life, and distorts every divine-implanted principle which should adorn and enrich the human character, and finally consigns its victims to eternal death. It is for these reasons that the Christian people should meet this dread enemy face to face, and each one individually, in the strength of God, do what they can to disarm this formidable foe of its weapons of destruction.

One of the most noticeable features of infidelity is that it confounds the professor with the things professed. Out of the countless numbers of Christ's followers they select isolated and exceptional cases of moral humbugs and hypocrites, and make these test cases by identifying them with those that serve Christ from pure, honest, and sincere motives. The insincere and unfaithful follower of Christ is to those who are sincere and faithful what the exceptional

cases are to every rule and practice of theoretical and practical life. Christ, through His words, teachings, and sufferings, offered Himself to the world as a personal Saviour, and ranging down through every age since His crucifixion, countless numbers have accepted Him as such, and have testified to this experience everywhere and under almost every condition and circumstance of life; yet infidels have steadfastly and persistently refused to accept the testimony of those on whom it is infinitely more obligatory to bear true witness than upon any other class. And this volume of testimony has proven of but little avail in shaking the unbelief of the infidel world; they wilfully close their eyes against the most plausible interpretation of divine mercy, and fail to realize that, in the economy of divine rule, mercy is the central figure, and justice only incidental. Divine mercy can be best understood and determined by citation to the fact that Christ through His Spirit stands between a crown of life and the flames of perdition, and incessantly pleads with the sinner, through the whole range of a wayward and wicked life, to accept Him, and often follows him to his deathbed in the vain hope that His offer of salvation will not be rejected in the moment of the soul's imminent and certain peril. It is this inevitable conviction that makes it essentially true that, so far from it being difficult to believe in Christ and accept Him, it requires the incessant moral resistance of one's whole life to prevent them from accepting Him. Any person is an object of commiseration who attempts to compare and measure divine justice by human justice; there is scarcely a shade of resemblance to be traced between human justice where every offense is punished and mercy is only incidental, and the long-suffering sinner seeking the Saviour, who will grant forgiveness and salvation in a moment to a sinner at the end of a life of open sin and infamy. There is in the whole dark category of crime, sin, and disobedience, but one that God will not in a twinkling forever forgive and forget, and that is for rejecting salvation through Christ, His dearly beloved Son. Wilfully rejecting Christ is the most criminally guilty act that ever stained and blemished a human soul. It is for this one act, and not for a perverse life mingled with darkling crimes and deeds of infamy, that the soul is to be subject to eternal death; and nothing is more morally certain than that no one will ever find their way to the region of eternal suffering unless they have had an opportunity of knowing Christ and accepting Him, and have wilfully rejected and refused Him. No one will ever be cast away or lost until rivers of divine love have been wasted upon them. Such is infinite mercy. And whatever may be the state of future punishment, and whoever may be the unfortunate ones to be subjected to such a fate, and however much the features and conditions of such a state as we understand them may conflict with human conceptions of justice,

one thing is settled beyond question: it is that the conditions of such a punishment will be divinely and infinitely just and it is premature to take exceptions in this life to the conditions of eternal suffering and retribution in the future life. We can easily conform to the conditions and rulings of infinite justice and mercy, but it is beyond our power to subject them to changes and modifications so that they will not conflict with our wishes and opinions. Yet this is the most conspicuous failing of the human race. Along every conceivable and possible avenue and pathway leading from the varied and complex imagination, we find people pursuing the most apparent shadows and phantoms, making life a frightful nightmare by inconsistent dealing with the common experience and issues of life. We find men assailing the Church with bitter invective, as if it was the scorpion of society, and rejecting Christ and salvation through His name as if the very atmosphere in which a Christian lived was impregnated with the poison of the upas tree; rejecting and casting the Bible aside like an insane pilot on a foundering ship, amid the breakers of the ocean, casting his compass overboard, when the truth is, if infidels and skeptics could see in a true light their distorted perverted and deformed minds, they would flee from them as from a hideous skeleton invested with a demon's spirit. Yet no alternative is furnished for one who holds such views. There can be no possible palliation or excuse for one who employs the energy, talents, and moral force of their whole life in a fanatic effort to hinder and suppress divine revelation and truth.

The Bible is the world's chart and compass to protect us from the shoals as we go bounding over the ocean of life on our voyage to eternity, and whoever rejects it will drift upon the merciless waves, and they will find themselves stranded, wrecked, and eternally lost. On the next plane below the infidel, and drifting on the same stream and on the same current that is to bear them on to destruction, are the partial believers, who, by some incomprehensible process of reasoning, arrive at the conclusion that part of Christ's miracles were divine and part human. This view is even more inconsistent than open infidelity, as some forbearance and patience can be exercised toward one who fails to find any traces of divinity in the Bible, and who even repudiates it as a history, but it is a plausible and self-evident impossibility for any one to consistently believe part of Christ's teachings and miracles to be divine and the rest human. His miracles were gems that radiantly sparkle with divine light, or else they are nothing.

The true Christian sustains the relation to Christ of kinship. Christ is to them a conscious, present, and personal Saviour; to them the towering mountain ranges which they behold, the surging

ocean over which they voyage from one continent to another, the earth on which they tread, the stars and planets that glitter in the heavens above them, sink away from view as tangible realities when compared with the personal relationship the true heirs of salvation sustain to the risen Saviour.

Here is the stumbling stone over which the infidel world has fallen. Here is the whirlpool of misapprehension that has swallowed up the unbelievers through all ages. The solution to the problem of infidelity is found in the fact that it is unfortunately an essential impossibility for any one to accept or understand religion to be a tangible reality until after they have sustained relations to Christ as a personal Saviour. Infidels drape faith so deep in mystery that they lose sight of it entirely, and then cut loose from the last vestige of possible hope and drift from a safe mooring into the swift eddy of destruction. Notwithstanding the yearning, brooding, and restraining influence of the Divine Spirit, countless myriads have pursued this phantom to the brink of life, and then plunged so deep into the abyss of eternal ruin that the splash has never been heard; and yet while infidels refuse to accept a belief of faith, and clamor for something tangible that they can handle with their hands and see with their eyes, they can be seen upon every hand crystalizing and subliming material scenes, works of art, beautifying deeds of heroism or the acts of benevolence into principles and thought, which are as invisible to their eyes as the inhabitants of the supernal world. The want of something tangible is the key note to infidel argument. It is morally certain that if there was located upon the earth a *literal* and material precipice, over which the souls of men at the rate of thirty millions annually were plunging into eternity, part shackled and fettered by sin, led by demons through the portals of the infernal regions, part clad in blood-washed garments guided by angelic messengers through the golden gates into the heavenly courts of the new Jerusalem, doubtless infidels of every class, without ceremony, would make a pilgrimage to this visible material scene of mortal dissolution, and find upon witnessing it a remedy for their unbelief. While to a belief of faith, and to the invisible influence and relation of Christ's Spirit to the human soul, men stand as an almost inaccessible fortress; they blindly persist in refusing to have relations with anything they can not demonstrate to be material and tangible. The conversion of the soul is the greatest ordeal of one's life only by reason of its being an *experience* which links the human with the divine. Experience is the very soil in which a Christian life is sown. Conversion is stumbling over the threshold of experience into the arms of Christ.

REPUBLICANISM.

There is a sense in which the gift of prophecy or infallible judgment (as in this article we prefer to use these as synonymous terms) is true. It is true along the line of truth and equity. It is true and useful in human affairs when used to determine the result of cause and effect. It is true when used for the purpose of deciding the question as to whether Right, Justice, and Truth shall ultimately triumph over Crime, Injustice, and Wrong. There was a prophecy uttered and proclaimed long before the medieval ages that resounded over the plains of Judea and round about Bethlehem, and was heard everywhere that tradition marks the foot-steps of our Saviour at the dawn of the Christian era—a prophecy which is divinely true, and which rings with tremulous sweetness to-day in the ears of all who believe it. It is the prophecy of the millennial day, or, in other words, that day of visible divine rule upon the earth, when righteousness and truth shall be universal. Whoever is living to-day in the effulgent glow of divine influence and power, and witnessing on their right and on their left the advance and approach of the completion of the reform tide that is to revolutionize human government, socially, politically, and spiritually, and fails to understand its import and destiny, if not wilfully blind was born blind, and is waiting for something more tangible than literal facts.

Any person who, in watching the evolution and progress of the human race, sees displayed in it the hand of an All-wise Creator, and realizes that every element, fiber, and condition associated with human affairs is tending to flow into that channel which is to carry us on to perfection, and that it is God's plighted intention and promise to establish and perfect a government among His people based on equity, justice, and truth, is a prophet, and need not be ashamed of his calling.

In the face of these statements then, whatever is right will triumph, and whatever is wrong will fail. If this be true then how necessarily false must be the predictions of the press from many quarters, that Republicanism is on the wane, that the day for the dissolution of the Republican party is near at hand, and that following in the wake of every similar organization it must necessarily suffer defeat and disintegration. But all such predictions are made without consideration and regard for the principles upon which it is founded and for the just reasons upon which its perpetuity is based. We can conceive of no ruling more consistent with human and divine laws and government than that Right, Justice, and Truth shall triumph over all obstacles and hindrances. The Republican party represents in the broadest and most truthful sense the intelligence, patriotism, and religion of our country. The Republican

party has a record purchased by the blood of its patriots, offered as a sacrifice, not as violators, but as defenders of their liberty. Its glorious record of four years of brave and daring deeds will last through all generations. Though its prestige has been marred and crippled by eight years of misrule and unskilled administration, it will yet recover all it has lost, and assert its former power and significance. The success of the Republican party is not dependent and does not hinge on local and abstract issues and causes, but will succeed by reason of its enterprise and honest purposes. It represents the political progress of modern times. Its destiny is subject to the inevitable result of every institution that is based on the noblest principles and has for its aim the noblest purposes. It is following in the retinue of every institution that has succeeded by reason of righteous purposes and aims. It has for its foundation and support principles that cannot be supplanted by anything better, and it will yet teach the world a lesson of experience by drawing to itself those that love purity, justice, and righteousness. It is the refuge for the Christian people of this country to day, and in the grand future that awaits this country the supporters of the Republican party will be the representatives of its progress and advancement. That power wielded by the ignorant and unscrupulous classes of our land will gradually be supplanted by a higher order of intelligence and nobler principles. How can we expect a righteous administration of laws and government unless we have righteous office-holders? And how can we expect righteous office-holders unless those entrusted with the privilege of franchise are righteous? The administration of laws and government—Municipal, State, and National—will be purified and ennobled just in proportion to the increase of intelligence, moral principles, and religion; and all spasmodic attempts to reform a nation, upon any other basis will be as bubbles rising here and there on the surface, to burst and pass into obscurity. Moral impulses and principles are yet to rule the world—and that with a grandeur that will cause us to tremble at its beauty and significance. No intellect can conceive of the sublime features to be revealed by a nation free to use to the best advantage every instrumentality placed within its reach. As a nation we virtually began our existence one hundred years ago. The brilliant and glorious successes achieved during that time are truly marvellous; but how much sublimer will the record be when another hundred years shall have passed! The position we have gained is surely worth something by way of experience in fighting the battle of Progress in the future, but we must be careful how we arrogate to ourselves the praise and honor of the achievements already won, and let us not forget that we are being led by an All-wise and beneficent Creator. The progress of

the world to-day points to that long foretold millennial, when righteousness shall rule the earth. Every development and advance that awakens our surprise has lain buried in an intellectual vault from eternity, and is brought to life only at the bidding of Him who conceived and placed it there. That evolution which characterizes and follows in the train of our efforts, intellectually, morally, and politically, is but the unfolding and continued creation of Divine organization. God's guiding hand is leading us through the wilderness into the Promised Land beyond; in other words, the advance of the world by which the radiant light of intelligence and Christianity is illuminating the earth means that the latter-day glory is coming rapidly. This work of Divine completion demands the individual assistance of all who profess the name of the Son of man, for it is through human instrumentalities that this great work is to be accomplished. Yet it is not within the range of human power to turn the influence which under divine guidance is to usher in a perfect day. It is the duty then of those who have this faith to place their hands as those of little children in the great hand of God. He will lead us through the perils of life, and sustain and guide us in the paths of progress.

With what fatuity of intellect and vision do we forecast the future? Who dares to day, after having witnessed the developments of the last half century, set any limit to what will be unfolded in the next half century? Forty years ago the sagacious Charles Dickens said that it was in accordance with divine and human law, and in keeping with the experience and history of the world that when a people had reached a certain elevation in the progress of art and enlightenment by education, for them to retrograde to whence they had started, and predicted when that change would take place in this country. But how signally he failed in that prediction! And his failure is attributable to the fatal mistake of supposing that progress and enlightenment were subject to abnormal rule, and that human instead of divine power and influence controlled and governed the unfolding of God's own creation. Everything in this world that has Right, Truth, and Justice for its foundation is ordained and destined of God for a high and noble purpose, and can never culminate in defeat. That banner which bears for its insignia the Cross of Christ will yet wave triumphantly over every nation of the earth. Wherever it floats to-day the noblest and best representatives of the most enlightened races are helping to bear it on to victory. The Redeemer's kingdom is towering in its grandeur and beauty far above any temporal kingdom that has ever been reared.

The annals of the human race have no parallel to offer in contrast with the kingdom of love, thought, and moral impulses over which Christ reigns and rules for His own glory. Reader have you enlist-

ed under this banner? If not, be faithful to yourself in accepting the privilege of working for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Remember that if you reject that privilege your life at its close will but represent a blank page in the history of earth's deeds written in heaven.

AUTHORSHIP.

To write a good article the writer should be deeply in earnest and in love with his theme. It is scarcely possible to write an article worth reading unless the writer's mind is kindled with enthusiasm over his subject. It is barely possible to distinguish right from wrong unless one's thoughts are colored with the glow of enthusiasm. Whoever would write well must put the best there is in them in their article.

The ideal author is one who can write a hundred volumes, or if not a hundred volumes a hundred paragraphs or sentences of a few lines each which will prove so interesting and instructive as to be worth reading and re reading. But we are not unconscious of how much the organization and construction of the brain has to do with the quality of literary production. No amount of mental endeavor or effort can be made a substitute for native talent in a literary pursuit. Victor Hugo recently made at once one of the wisest and most witty remarks of the present century : upon being asked if it was not very difficult to write good poetry he replied "no, that it was either very easy or else it was utterly impossible." Yet no moderately intelligent person need despair of writing well until they discover that they are a failure in literary undertakings at the close of three, four or five years of careful and faithful application in the endeavor to cultivate taste and talent for the work. Probably ninety-nine out of one hundred of the people we meet in everyday life are wholly unconscious of the many gifts and excellencies of mind they possess and which might by culture and use be made to shine like aurora lights. There seems to be no good reason why we should not all be authors, or in other words as a means of self-culture and improvement every person should cultivate a love and taste for writing ; and should do a given amount of vigorous thinking for themselves ; and if the commencing and pursuing of a literary pursuit with no other purpose or aim in view than the promotion of this proves a failure, it will not be fruitless.

There is scarcely anyone living an active life and taking chances in this world whose life is so uneventful but that if they would day by day write up their own experience, the beatings and impulses of their own hearts, the thoughts and inspirations of their own minds could fill a volume with lore as pathetic, as thrilling, as exciting, as

mournful and as sad, as wierd and as strange as was ever woven in the warp and woof of fact or fiction in literature. For it is the language of experience that produces the finest impressions. Experience is an inexhaustible fountain, at which the whole world can drink, as its everflowing crystal waters wash over the white shining stones in the stream of daily life. Again, thoughts that flow in the current of human sympathy will ever awaken interest, and be read with pleasure. This will necessarily lead to the use of emotional language, without which element comparatively all books and papers are dull and uninteresting, and are scarcely worth reading.

Convictions are prime essentials to good authorship. Convictions are as indispensable as ideas, and *vice versa*. A man without convictions is like a "reed shaken by the wind;" a man without ideas is like the fig tree, "leaves but no fruit." Language is a third consideration. Whoever has convictions and ideas will never be at a loss for suitable language with which to express them.

But lastly and best of all is an intuition by which to determine right from wrong. There is nothing in this world more grand and noble than to be right upon every question with which we have to deal in life. There is but one way to attain to this accomplishment. A fountain of truth flows more perpetually than the fragrant flowers bloom beneath the tropic sun; go with your golden cup and drink at the fountain-head; go sit at the feet of the Divine Master, and learn of Him, who spake as never man spake.

UNITY.

The rendering of perfect obedience to God's laws is an open question. The clashing of arguments upon this one question will doubtless be heard as long as people inhabit the earth. But do not people disagree upon every theme and question of life? Do not a manifold variety of views, thoughts and principles differentiate throughout the whole economy of the intellectual realm? Are not the different views, phases and conditions of life as diversified as the sands on the sea-shore, or as the leaves of the forest, or as the hues and fragrance of the flowers that cover the prairie? But are we to understand by reason of the illimitable diversity of the pebbles upon the seashore, or by reason of the endless variety of the waves continuously racing over their track on the boundless ocean in majestic beauty and grandeur, or by reason of the infinite multiplicity of variations in the physical creation of the universe, that the ever-living minds of men are to differ upon every question of life? Is there an endless hue, shade and variation to every truth linked with human experience, even that experience which asso-

ciates us with the thought of eternal life, that experience which is to prepare the immortal soul for its dwelling place in the presence of its Maker? Is there not some untrammelled path cleared and hedged by the hand of a beneficent Creator in which the burdened soul is free to turn in its pursuit of heaven? Is it one of the divine-implanted and ordained regulations and rulings in God's economy in dealing with men that they are to differ upon the questions, purity, virtue, and truth? Are we, until the divinely foretold consummation of this earth shall have come to pass, to play upon an endless variety of instruments? Is not this discordant and hideous concert to cease until the race is swept into eternity? Are we, until the consummation of all things earthly, to be subjected to this ceaseless noise of innumerable and inharmonious instruments in the social, political, and religious world? Is not this only a hideous nightmare of imperfection in the passage of human experience? Is unity possible, not in that sense that the world's thoughts are to turn and flow into one channel, but in that sense that truth is a divine attribute and that it is not subject to variations? Our answer is, yes; it will be the universal result of a more advanced stage of life's progress; it is possible along the line of divine truth as Christ taught it to the world. It will follow as the result of Christian conduct and experience flowing into one channel, which state and condition in the world's progress will be reached only when the erroneous views and misapprehensions of men shall be universally supplanted by truth and Christian conduct, as was taught and exhibited in the life of the world's Saviour; it will be the result of a higher, purer and nobler Christian standard than has yet been attained; it will be only when there is less dogma and insipid theology and more of the spirit and power of Christ as a personal Saviour is woven into the Christian's experience, conduct, and duty. Divine grace alone can influence and turn the souls of men into the only channel through which unity is possible. Whoever in the past ages and history of Christian progress has attained to this experience has reached the highest standard, though the purer, truer and sweeter conception of Christ as a personal Saviour was never so universal and never so unhindered by dogma and priestcraft as at the present day. Men are Christian by virtue of accepting Christ and being accepted by Him. The Christian's magna charta for salvation is found in the essential act of accepting Christ as a risen, living and personal Saviour. Nothing either on earth or in heaven is freer from the least taint or tinge of superstition, priestcraft or dogmatism than the soul that finds salvation through grace in Christ. Such salvation is the very incarnation of purity. And churches, the organization of which is in the main human invention and the outgrowth of human demands and necessities,

and is divine mainly to that extent that they are associated with divine work and are the instrumentalities used for the advance of Christ's kingdom on earth, are subject to change. Does the short period of time that has intervened since the Reformation tide and since church organizations, as they stand to day, afford us any substantial and incontrovertible evidence that the unity of them at some advanced future day is not possible? This unity is the inevitable tendency and drift of the churches as seen from the standpoint of public opinion at the present day, and will be effected only when churches have rid themselves of the last vestige of heresies, or in other words, abstract isolated and disconnected theological views and tenets. He is a dwarfed Christian who is not larger than his church and his creed. Why does the scholar and student leave the college and seminary if not for the reason that he has grown larger than the institution that has held him through many years of assiduous study? Churches are valuable, indispensable and sacred in that they educate and develope men in spiritual things, and are the means of grace of bringing men up into a royal manhood in Christ. The unity of the church, however, is not the object labored for, and is not the wish of theologians at the present day only to a meagre extent; and if this is to be the inevitable result it will not be effected without a struggle, for the churches individually will be found the resisting power and influence to such a coalition. But in the event of any revolution in church government it is largely the most plausible view to expect a union of all orthodox churches. There is hanging above and before the eyes of the human race a mystic veil which must be pushed back, step by step, as it moves forward in its slow and uncertain progress and unfolding; to the Christian who lives by faith there is to be seen in the foreground of human progress an invisible temple, chaste and pure, clothed in royal ordination, towering in sublime beauty above everything earthly, transcendently rich in adornment and architecture, its glittering spires reaching higher toward heaven than human vision can soar; along the highways and byways leading to this temple are innumerable throngs, composed of every tribe, nation, color, class and condition, seeking its courts, singing as they go in strains sweet and tremulous the new song of Moses and the Lamb; at last it is reached—it is the temple of the ever-living God, the refuge of the pilgrim while the storms of life are breaking above and around him on his way from earth to heaven. The central figure of this temple is Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, the risen Saviour, the Prince of Peace, the Son of man—who when lifted up was to draw all men unto Him. This temple is the central figure of the universe. The eyes of the world are fixed upon it. The Son of man is still within its courts. From it is radiating

through all the recesses, from the nearest to the most distant mountains, valleys and forests of the earth, that influence that is swiftly drawing the remnants of a burdened and weary race to it for refuge, peace and rest. This temple and kingdom consists of the aggregate of souls that love Christ, the Lord and Saviour, in sincerity. This temple is wherever a soul seeks and holds communion with its Maker. Religion is found alone in the living souls of men. The only true religion known is that which is centered in love to Christ. All others are essentially false. Churches are but cold, barren walls, inside of which is confusion, and oftentimes discord; it is a good place to enjoy religion, but it is almost the poorest place in the world to seek it. No place on earth compares with the silent and unsuspected closet. No sanctuary on earth is so fragrant with ineffible associations as the sequestered place where a soul first learns a Saviour's love and hears the chant of reconciliation to its Maker. The church is but fairly entered upon its mission of saving souls; it is but emerging from darkness into twilight. Is it not true that it is slumbering over the embers of a lost race—not lost so much by reason of its apathy as by reason of misapplied, impractical and non-specific efforts. What Christ's kingdom stands in the greatest need of is, that all its individual members should be champions in its behalf and labor for its advancement—champions that can and will speak glowing words flaming with love—that will move the souls with which they come in contact; for every time a soul is moved by a noble and divine impulse it is brought nearer the kingdom of heaven. Reader, you are called to a distinction between a life of indifference and infidelity to a life of faith in the merits of Christ and salvation by grace.

You are not wanted as a nominal believer and follower; if you cannot, in the act of coming, cast every pleasure and indulgence that is savored and tinged with sin at the foot of the cross, to be eternally forsaken by you—which the all-sufficient grace of Christ will give you grace to do—then you are not wanted. It is both for the good of you and the cause of Christ that you stay away. And to the nominal believer, whose efforts in the direction of a Christian life have been fruitless because of misapprehension—they who are cautiously drawing a line of distinction with their consciences between good and evil, and then approaching it from the Christian side on tiptoe, peeping over on the opposite side in their efforts to see how far they can transgress and trample beneath their feet divine principles and commands with impunity—we have but to say that your duty is to go back to the beginning and come again by way of consecration. A true religious life is one that sparkles with divine light and love. It is exchanging the tattered and crimson garments of sin for the royal robe of grace and salvation through Christ Jesus.

DECORATION DAY.

*An Editorial upon Decoration Day, including an extract from
General Sherman's Speech at Booth's Theater, New
York City, May 30, 1878.*

More than one century has intervened since the seed was sown from which sprung the feudal strife so memorable in our nation's history, while but thirteen years have elapsed since the clashing armies of the North and South broke down the brazen partition which severed the Union, and estranged the sympathies of brother from brother in their native land. With the recurrence of the 30th of May, men and women, with hearts stirred with patriotism and hands prompted by motives of love and fidelity to the fallen heroes slumbering in the national cemeteries, gather together to weave garlands and strew flowers upon their graves. There is interwoven in the ceremony of scattering the freshest and best of spring flowers—heralds of the Maker's beauty and purity—upon the graves of the dead soldiers a sentiment that, while tempered by melancholy recollections, is yet full of beauty and joy, and which is growing with the ages. The past with its sad history cannot be blotted out or forgotten, yet the votive wreath has been laid upon the graves of those who staked and lost their lives upon the defeated side and who slumber by the side of the conqueror in the bivouac of the dead. But while we would like to dwell upon this feature of the theme, we cannot forget that garlands can be woven with beautiful words fraught with patriotism and wisdom. But few, if perhaps any but Sherman, scattered fresh chaplet leaves fragrant with sentiment that did not fade and wither away ere the ceremonies of the day had been completed. The ceremonies at Booth's Theatre in this great city, in which General Sherman participated, were savored with much that was sublime and beautiful, Mr. Sherman speaks forth the words of truth and soberness. Read his own words:

"MR PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—The grand pageant we have witnessed to-day in the streets of this busy mart of commerce, and the handsome assemblage of people that now fills this hall to overflowing, demonstrate unmistakably that the public interest in the events of 1861-65 did not die out with the heroes and martyrs of that epoch. We know that all over this broad land this memorial day has been dedicated to the beautiful custom of decorating with earth's fairest and freshest flowers the graves of the patriotic men who died that we might possess in peace a united country and a Government worth having. The fragrance of these flowers, rising to heaven from such altars, cannot but prove an acceptable peace-offering at the throne of Him who holds in his hands the destiny of all people.

"There are such things as abstract right and abstract wrong, and when history is written human actions must take their place in one or the other category. We claim that in the great civil war we of the National Union Army were right and our adversaries wrong; and no special pleading, no excuses, no personal motives, however pure and specious, can change this verdict of the war.

"I would not for the world revive the angry passions of that period of time, nor do I question the personal motives of our antagonists; but I do and ever will contest the proposition that we should tear from the history of our country the pages which record

the great events from 1860 to 1865; for they should stand there forever as a warning to those who come after us—who, from passion, self-interest, or any human cause or pretext whatever, may undertake to destroy this Government by violence. No! the deeds of our dead heroes are already recorded in the great book of Time, and marble and brass will continue to record them long after we are dead and gone. In the language of our great leader General Grant, we will never apologize for the deeds done in 1861-65, but will treasure up their memory, and on every suitable occasion, as long as life lasts, will present them anew to the youth of this country as noble examples of heroism and patriotism; for they saved this nation from absolute annihilation, or, at the very least, from a long period of intestine war and anarchy."

Mr. Sherman's speech, from the beginning to its close, as might have been expected, had the true ring of old-time patriotism and loyalty. But, alas! how slow we are in gathering lessons of eternal truth from the sad experience of the days of rebellion! How slow we are in seeing the hand of an all-wise God accomplishing a work of infinite importance and magnitude! He who to-day reflecting on the past fails to see displayed in the war of the rebellion and its subsequent results the guiding and loving hand of a beneficent Creator, leading as it were His chosen people through a wilderness into a promised land of peaceful fruition, has fought the war in vain and for no purpose. The record of the sacrifice of half a million of brave and daring heroes upon the field of carnage to ransom a race from the thralldom of bondage, though draped in melancholy memories, marks a sublime and glorious passage in the experience of our national life and progress. Yet it but faintly symbolizes the willing sacrifice of the world's Saviour whom Roman cowardice and Jewish malice nailed to the cross upon Calvary, and which will in the event of God's own time ransom the whole world from the thralldom of sin and suffering.

IRREVERSIBLENESS OF LAW.

The absolute irreversibility of Natural Law is a theme of infinite moment. Regardless of the events and changes that take place during the lifetime of a generation of people, we can always depend upon the constant working of Nature's Laws, upon the sun rising and setting without one second's variation from its wonted time upon its yearly revolutions, producing and reproducing its seasons with invariable constancy; upon the unfailing law of evaporation, and the return of the water upon the earth; upon the flow and ebb of the tides, moving to celestial bodies; upon the continued constancy of the law of gravitation, holding every clod and every rock and every tree upon earth, as it whirls around in its daily revolutions. Upon this central certainty of Natural Law civilization depends. Who does not know that Natural Laws will go on their courses producing the same results they have always produced;

and who does not depend upon the constancy of Natural Laws. Who doubts but that seed time and harvest time will come again in their appointed time. The profound and miraculous workings of Natural Laws are startling to contemplate, and are enough to excite a deep sense of awe and reverence in the minds of all who set themselves to this task.

We have in the diurnal revolution of this world the only exhibition of perpetual motion this world has ever witnessed. The very idea and law of constancy is derived from the perfect and perpetual working of Natural Law. This is a grand theme of itself and might be lengthened out indefinitely, but we only wish to use it in this connection to illustrate one, if possible, more grand and awe-inspiring. Over against the existence and operations of Natural Laws is the divine revelation of Spiritual Laws, their exactions and obligations and the certain fearful looking for the execution of the penalty when they are violated. If we have in the irreversibleness of the Natural Laws an exhibition and illustration of the irreversibleness of Spiritual Laws, what must the harvest for eternity be? Christ two thousand years ago declared that He was the light of the world. Has not this declaration been verified to the letter? Can we trace one gleam or ray of modern enlightenment and civilization to any other source than to Him? Believe or not believe his miracles, place what stress you will upon His claims of divinity, His life of self sacrifice and self denial, His death on the cross and resurrection, from that time dates the grandest and most successful revolution the world has ever known. Science would have us believe that it is the light of the world, and that it is to lead the world on to its destiny; but at best, what a feeble, flickering light it throws upon the world; and besides, has it not lighted its torch at the altars of Christianity?

The progress of Christ's Kingdom is exciting the interest of the nations of the world. Never before were His claims of divinity so honored as in the present age. Nations are almost daily entering His courts and bowing at His throne owning His, right to reign King of Kings. His teachings are read, honored and revered by the people of every land. The Bible is fast becoming the text book of the world, and infidels are abandoning their hope of overthrowing it. The Bible fares with the assaults of the infidels and skeptics very much as does the Alpine Peaks with the riven lightning that clashes about them, and the angry storm clouds that burst upon them, when the storm is past they stand unscathed and unharmed in the serene Italian air; or very much as does the shore of a continent stand the beating of the ocean's surfs. For centuries the Bible has stood the fierce and repeated attacks of infidels, but like the shore it lasts and will in eternal serenity last.



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